

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in an expression of appreciation to Mr. Theodore Gundlach for his years of service to his community and to wish he and his family the very best in the future.

WELCOME TO PRESIDENT
NURSULTAN NAZARBAYEV

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome to the United States, our true friend and strong ally, the President of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Since gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has overcome numerous obstacles and challenges to emerge as one of the world's most dynamic and promising nations. Much of the credit for that should go to President Nazarbayev who led his country through difficult and painful reforms which brought about strong economic and democratic change.

Economically, Kazakhstan is accelerating beyond neighboring countries and most other countries in the world. It is evident that citizens of Kazakhstan are being offered a better tomorrow because the leadership remains committed in investing in its people and country.

Democratically, the ongoing economic liberalization inspired by President Nazarbayev would not be possible without the establishment of democratic institutions coupled with a civil society unique to the social-political nature of Kazakhstan and its people. The creation of over 5,000 NGO's, the founding of an independent judiciary, and the institutionalizing of a pluralistic, multi-party system are just a few examples of the impressive "resume of freedom" that this nation has built over the last decade. Kazakhstan is setting a noble example of what can be accomplished through democracy.

Democratization and domestic initiatives are intricately linked to foreign policy. Kazakhstan's dedication to the war on terror is admirable and deeply appreciated by the United States. It is important that the United States and Kazakhstan continue to work together to defeat those who want to destroy our most treasured values.

Today, Kazakhstan is a strong promoter of global peace and stability and I commend President Nazarbayev for taking concrete steps to bring together people of different religions by initiating the Congress of World and Traditional Religions which has become a respected forum where believers of all faiths can work in partnership to find better ways for a better future.

Additionally, Kazakhstan continues to serve as a model to the global community in its leadership on nonproliferation by voluntarily disarming what was once the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal.

Mr. Speaker, Kazakhstan has a rich cultural heritage and a bright future. The people of Kazakhstan should be proud of their achievements and their leader. It is my hope that the United States and Kazakhstan will continue to build bridges, share ideas, and work closely

together for years to come. I am confident that President Nazarbayev's visit to Washington is a strong testament of our growing strategic partnership, and I join many of my colleagues in wishing him a joyful and productive stay in our Nation's Capital.

THANKING MR. RON KURTZ FOR
HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement in September 2006, we rise to thank Mr. Ron Kurtz for 26 years of outstanding service to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Ron began his career at the House working as a Systems Programmer. In that capacity, Ron has served this great institution for the last 26 years as a valuable employee of House Information Resources (HIR) within the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. Ron has made significant contributions in the implementation and management of the mainframe computing environment and, more recently, as a key member of the Storage Area Network (SAN) team. Ron's impeccable management of the mainframe computing environment, through emergencies such as the anthrax contamination event, was key to maintaining continuity of such essential House applications as payroll, the Legislative Information Management Systems (LIMS) and Committee Calendars (CCALS). Additionally, Ron has expertly managed the mainframe environment through numerous advances in technology to include integration with a Storage Area Network as part of the overall HIR business continuity efforts.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Ron for his many years of dedication and outstanding contributions to the U.S. House of Representatives. We wish Ron many wonderful years in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

ENHANCING THE GLOBAL FIGHT
TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I chaired a briefing and hearing of the House International Relations Committee to examine means to enhance the global fight to end human trafficking.

When I held the first hearing on trafficking as chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights back in 1999, only a handful of countries had laws explicitly prohibiting the practice of human trafficking. Individuals who engaged in this exploitation did so without fear of legal repercussions. Victims of trafficking were treated as criminals and illegal immigrants, and had no access to assistance to escape the slavery-like conditions in which they were trapped. Few seemed to even be aware that this modern form of slavery was taking place, and

those who did failed to recognize it as a violation of fundamental human rights.

However, the situation has changed markedly over the past 6 years. Significant credit for improvements must be attributed to the enactment of the trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, together with two reauthorizations of that Act in 2003 and 2005, all of which I sponsored. These three laws created a comprehensive framework for combating trafficking in persons abroad, as well as the trafficking of American girls and young women within the U.S. As a result of these three laws, our government has been a leader in addressing this serious human rights violation and encouraging other governments to do the same.

Just this past weekend, I experienced the impact of this leadership during a trip to Iraq. Millions of people who lack job opportunities are misled by ads for well-paying jobs and leave their countries for what is presented to them to be the chance of a lifetime. Last year, the Chicago Tribune did a series of articles detailing a practice by employment brokers and subcontractors to bring laborers into Iraq through fraud or coercion. The seizure of the workers' passports and recruitment "fees" made it difficult for them to escape employment in a war zone. After the State Department trafficking report confirmed this practice, my Subcommittee held a hearing in which Colonel Robert Boyles testified that the military had issued an order that all contracts include a clause allowing termination without penalty, prohibits the use of unlicensed employment brokers, and ends the practice of confiscating worker passports.

With the compliance inspections set to begin this month, one of the major objectives of my visit to Iraq was to ensure that the order on labor trafficking would be enforced. Major General Bruce Moore, the Chief of Staff for our military in Iraq, assured me that compliance was being checked on this. As of the time of our subcommittee hearing, 90 percent of the contracts had been modified, and the military is ensuring that the other 10 percent will be modified and that implementation of the order will be complete.

Also on my trip this weekend, I spoke with State Department officials about trafficking in Kuwait and Germany. According to reports earlier this year, more than 40 Indian youth had been stranded in Kuwait when their passports had been confiscated by unscrupulous job brokers and had been penalized by Kuwaiti police. State Department officials told me that they have launched an aggressive program entitled FALCON for Fostering Awareness of Labor Conditions to let foreign workers know their rights. In Germany, State Department officials described efforts to discourage patronage of brothels during the World Cup earlier this year in which women and girls were coerced into prostitution. Efforts were especially concentrated on ensuring that the U.S. military did not patronize such establishments. Since the end of the World Cup, the U.S. has continued to work with the German government to ensure that coerced prostitution is ended to the extent possible and facilities are established to help prostitutes who want to escape that life.

One of the key components of the 2000 Act is the requirement that the Secretary of State provide Congress with a list of those countries whose governments are not fully complying with minimum standards to eliminate trafficking